

Pathways Video Presentation 2022 – Transcript

Welcome to St Alban's Catholic High School's **Pathways** presentation for 2022. My name is Mr Berry and I am the assistant headteacher with responsibility for curriculum at the school. Please can I recommend that you watch this presentation with your child. It is important that throughout the **Pathways** process, you and your child are talking about their possible choices as well as their concerns and questions. In this way, we can, together, ensure that students are best prepared to make the choices that are suitable for them as individuals.

Students in year 8 are often unsure about the subjects that they would like to take when they get to GCSE. Their **Pathway** towards GCSE can be uncertain and even worrying for them. Our **Pathways** process is designed to help students to see a clearer path to the future knowing that they may change direction if they need to and with guidance at all stages.

The current GCSE specifications are designed to stretch and challenge students. They contain increased content and most are assessed by final examinations only. All students take will take GCSE examinations in English, mathematics, science and religious education. Our **Pathways** process will help students to fully understand the challenge of each of the other subjects available before they make a decision to study the subject at GCSE. To enable this to happen we have begun to consider our **Pathway** towards GCSE in the second half of the Spring term.

At St Alban's we believe that education should be challenging, fun, broad and balanced. For this reason we encourage students to choose a range of subjects to engage them as learners and to keep their options open for further study in the future.

The skills that students will learn in all of our subject areas will benefit them in later life. Students will, of course, always have their preferences and the **Pathways** process will help them decide which of these subject skills will be of most benefit to their future path.

We recognise that, for some students, **up to ten** GCSEs is not appropriate. For this reason, there will also be alternative courses available in **Pathway Blocks A and D**. These courses will start in **Year 9** and be flexible and adaptable to the needs of the group. There may be elements of the course that will be externally accredited although that is not the overall reason for its existence. If you believe that this alternative course may be an appropriate part of your child's **Pathway** at the school, please contact Mrs Pickard, our SENCO.

GCSEs are more than three years away. We believe, however, that with the challenge of the new style GCSE examination students now need to be considering which subjects they wish to study further.

Following feedback from students and parents/carers we changed the system slightly last year and will continue to do so this year. We will now include “Triple Science” in block A. This will ensure that students who are taking three separate science GCSEs will have more curriculum time to complete these. This will be guided choice and the option will only be available to those expected to be in the top two sets in science.

As we begin the **Pathways** process, I encourage you to talk as a family and consider the subjects your child might choose in the future and how you can support them in their choices. Just after half term, I led an assembly introducing and giving some details of the process. Further assemblies have now followed with talks from each subject leader. In addition, students and parents/carers will also have videos available from each subject leader and some of their students about how their subject will develop over the next three years. This will outline how each subject will build on key stage 3 knowledge and skills and what they can expect to learn.

Students will also have taster lessons in each of the subjects on offer. These lessons will give them more information about each subject and will help students understand what they can expect from a GCSE lesson in each subject.

We are currently planning to hold our **annual Pathways Evening on Wednesday the 27th April 2022**, which will begin with a short time of worship followed by an opportunity to visit subject displays and talk to staff and senior leaders. Following this, students **will make their initial Pathway choice of four subjects**. There will be plenty of opportunities, later in the process, to change their *Pathway* if they wish to.

Subject choices will be in four Pathway blocks. Students will choose one subject and one reserve from each block using the SIMS Options online website. In each block there will be at least eight Pathway groups.

If you need advice about the best subjects to choose, there are a number of helpful websites available, such as successatschool.org

We also hold regular “Work Wednesdays” where representatives of local businesses come in to talk to our students about the world of work and the subjects that are most appropriate to study for a particular job. The website [icanbea](http://icanbea.co.uk) also has a wealth of information about jobs in Suffolk and Norfolk.

Even though your child is only in year 8, it is important to keep their future options open. We believe that it is generally best that students keep their choices as broad and balanced as possible. This means that students learn a variety of skills and knowledge that will best prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences in later life.

It is also important to remember that students do better in subjects they enjoy and are good at. This must be considered when choices are made.

We use an online system for students to make their *Pathways* choices. **Students will make a main and a reserve choice in each of four blocks. In each block there are eight groups available. In block A & D there will also be an alternative curriculum option that will appear for targeted students. Please note that a number of subjects are also available in other blocks to help students make a broad and balanced set of choices.** You will be given details of how to access the online system by email and there are step by step instructions in the Pathways Booklet. These initial choices will need to be made by the **11th May 2022**

Year 9 has become a transition year, blending key stage 3 subjects with GCSE subjects. At the start students will be building on the skills they have been taught to help them decide whether each subject is the correct choice for them as individual.

Students will have the opportunity to change ***Pathways*** at Christmas 2022. We will accommodate as many ***Pathway*** changes as we can. If a subject is unavailable, due to limits on class size, I will speak to each student individually to decide how to proceed. I will also, where appropriate, contact you as parents and carers. There will be another opportunity to change ***Pathways*** at Easter 2023.

It is our hope that by Christmas, the majority of students will have a clear view of their ***Pathway***. During this term subject areas will begin to teach content that will both complement the skills that were developed in the previous term and help lead them toward the GCSE course. This means that any student who has changed ***Pathway*** will not have missed any important information. There will, where necessary, be dialogue between subject leaders, parents/carers and students. Any ***Pathway*** changes during the term will be guided by this dialogue.

It is expected that students will then follow their ***Pathway*** through to the examinations at the end of year 11. This will ensure that they have sufficient time to learn and practice the skills and content needed in each of their subjects. The Pathways process will also ensure that groups are stable and committed to each subject by the start of year 10.

Thank you for watching this presentation. Please remember that you can ask questions by email or at our Pathways evening on the 27th April before you and your child make any decisions.

In the mean time, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at the school.